

# Valspar Championship

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

## Keith Mitchell

### Quick Quotes

**Q. That was a lot of good stuff that happened in a short time there with that finish. Can you walk us through the last three holes particularly?**

KEITH MITCHELL: The last three holes really here are -- it's called the Snake Pit for a reason. The wind today was more favorable on 16, so it was down on 16. Hit 5-wood and hit a nice 9-iron in there, actually a little past the flag. It was the first really good putt I've made all day of really substantial length. I finally read one right and hit it and knew when it was about three feet out it was in the hole. So I kind of gave myself a little fist pump there to try to get some energy going, some momentum going.

We were really in between clubs on 17. Between 6 and 7. I hit ended up hitting 6 to take as much wind out of the shot as possible. So had to take almost 20 yards off that club to get it to where it ended up. That was one of the best shots I've hit all day. Just kind of a tap-in putt.

Then 18, hit a good drive and kind of the same thing on that 7-iron. I had 59 hole and I hit my 7-iron close to 190, so it was 25 plus yards off that club. I just got to see the replay and it was pretty cool how it hopped in.

**Q. When you hit the shot, looked like you looked down and got something in your eye. Was that the case?**

KEITH MITCHELL: I actually did, when I looked up something kind of flew in my eye, so I kind of looked away and never saw it come down and land, but I knew, I was -- when I hit it, I was pleased with the contact. It's an elevated green, I wasn't going to be able to see it go in the hole anyway, but I didn't even see it come down next to the flag.

**Q. John was talking about you worked on some of those off-speed shots with the irons?**

KEITH MITCHELL: I have, a lot lately. I felt like I used to work on my just stock swing way too much, and I wasn't really practicing the shots I might have on the golf course as much on the range. So felt like really starting in Palm



Springs I started working on my distance control on the driving range instead of just my golf swing. It's really paid off. I've hit a lot of, been able to hit shots a lot more comfortably when I'm taking that much yardage off of 'em, knowing I can execute my number.

**Q. Did you have an eureka moment that made you start working on that area?**

KEITH MITCHELL: Yeah, I would say this off-season I kind had a team meeting with everybody, and my strokes gained approach relative to the field was very poor. There's some skews in there relative to your driving, but still it shouldn't be that poor. I was technically losing my card almost every year in strokes gained approach. That's just unacceptable out here. Especially when I feel like I have the technique to do it if I can hit my driver like I do. So it was all distance control. I learned that, fortunately. I hate that it took this long, but it's better late than never.

**Q. People look at your game and it's really complete. I mean, do you tell yourself you're ready to start winning a little more?**

KEITH MITCHELL: I tell myself that a lot, and sometimes when you tell yourself that too much and you don't win it actually can be a negative. It's really hard to win out here. I think I got my win early and felt like I could win more. Unfortunately, that's a really high expectation out here. Hopefully, I can continue to work on the right things, maybe even add some more stuff into my practice so that I can just put myself in contention more often. The more you're in contention the better chance you have to win.

**Q. You played that back nine, I think -- we were raving about you were 10-under going to the last, so you add two more to that, 12-under for the week on the back nine. Really haven't done much on 11, right, so what's that say about what happens to you at the turn here? What have you been getting going on that back nine?**

KEITH MITCHELL: It's a good question. Couple putts fall here or there -- and I started out, I know the, I guess the, I think I shot 5-under on Thursday morning, and that was just the greens were soft and there was no wind. It played



a lot more difficult since then. I think that had a lot to do with conditions the first round. Then today just couple good shots and a putter too.

**Q. You're the first player ever to go 4-under in the Snake Pit in a round. What's that do for your mentality headed into tomorrow?**

KEITH MITCHELL: Obviously some luck involved in that, but the good thing is I executed all the shots I wanted to. That's really all I could do. I could have hit those same shots and made three pars and been just as happy. So, honestly, if I can play like I -- I guess I should say if I hit the shots like I hit coming down the stretch tomorrow I'll have a chance. Because I hit 'em all where I wanted to. Johnny and I had some good numbers and we executed 'em well. Out here with the wind, small greens, small fairways, you can hit good shots and not get rewarded. But all in all just, it's really all we can control tomorrow.

**Q. This tournament holds some significance for you. Looking back to 2017, you made your TOUR debut here as a Monday qualifier. What do you remember from that week and how does that stick around when you go into this week?**

KEITH MITCHELL: Really, two memories. I remember walking off 7, I parred 7 on Friday and I knew I could bogey 8 and 9 and still make the cut (laughing). I feel like my mentality's changed a little bit. But playing on the Korn Ferry TOUR, making the cut in a TOUR event is huge to kind of get your career going. Anyway, I played great on the weekend. Then I remember I made probably a 45, 50-footer on the last hole to finish what I thought would have been top 10 to get into the next week. Eventually finished 11th. But that was really, I felt like, the first time I really knew I could compete out here, and man, it feels like yesterday, but it was a long time ago.

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